593x 586x everything. But they only succeed if they have no sons old enough to defend their mother. Differences in behavior are due to the character of the persons involved. (1)

1. See Chapter VIII, Article I.

797 593x 159 Only religion can bring about a radical change in this domain. We are still far from our goal, but a few serious Christians have already begun to adapt to the requirements of a higher morality and to deal with their wives in conformity with the sanctity of marriage though he or she may be ill. Yet it is more difficult for them to do this than for the others, since this same morality forbids [39] polygamy and all other means of satisfying passion.

An admirable case is that of Bekau Marie, daughter of Esalé D'Iámbo (Bonkoso). Her husband, Bokombeembe Pierre of Mbalá, suffered from leprosy for many years. He could no more perform the sexual act than do any real work. His wife therefore had to support herself with the help of her son. In spite of her freedom, her separation from her native village, and the ill feelings borne her by her husband's family, she did not want to leave him but decided that she would continue to devote herself to him. (1)

1. Her action is due only in part to Christian influence. That is why this case belongs here to the exclusion of some others I could describe, which are due solely to the influence of Christian morality upon the souls of the individuals.

593x 578 If there is a dispute between her family and her husband, it is hard to know in advance which side the wife will take. Similarly, if difficulties arise between the husband's family and his wife, he can take either his wife's side or that of his relatives. It is all a matter of individual temperament. Some people spontaneously lend support to their families; others on the contrary take sides with their wives. A woman or a man who without good reason habitually takes

593x 578 sides with his family against his wife does not have the approval of those who judge the conflict simply as neutral spectators. In such a case it is usually felt that the couple do not love each other very much. And often the marriage soon breaks up. But if the union is maintained nevertheless, its continuation is generally attributed to a fear of the consequences of dissolving the marriage, which would be even worse. The same sort of variation among individuals is to be found in the matter of a wife's devotion to the interests of her husband's family.

593x 596 It is not possible to compare a native household to the households of good simple people at home, where [40] the family is composed solely of parents and their children. Here it extends further; the husband's interests are also those of his parents, brothers, uncles, etc. As we will see in connection with marriage by inheritance it is not unusual for a woman to remain attached to her deceased husband's family. Others are more interested in enriching their own families.

593x 159 579 The following is a historical instance of a wife who was very devoted to her husband's interests, though there seemed to be room in her make-up for pride and personal glory. (1): Bolúmbú wá

1. According to my estimates, this episode is about a hundred years old. I knew two men who had recollections of it: the eldest (Longwokó of the Basɛ́ká Bengóngó, Bongíli) was about twenty years old when it occurred. A greatgranddaughter of Bonyeme (Mputú Sofie) is now in her forties.

nsánjí, daughter of Bokombe of Litúli (Bombwanja), was married to Bonyeme w'ɛ́nyuká of Bonganda (Bonkoso). One day (her father having died in the meantime) she went back to visit her brother, Bompelí w'ɛ́lombo, who had left Litúli to settle in his maternal village, Etɔ́o of the Boɛ́ndɛ́. They began to quarrel. Bompelí maintained that Bonyeme wasn't worth much, that his wealth was exaggerated, that it was a mistake to honor him, etc. Bolúmbú

593 defended her husband. Finally, since they could not agree, Bompelɛ́
159 ordered his sister not to return to her husband, so that she could be
579 married to another man. For he had decided to test the valor of Bonyeme by making war on him, and she could not see her husband taken prisoner by her own brother. Nevertheless, Bolúmbú remained determined and departed in haste. When she reached her husband she told him everything. In the meantime all the Boéndé and other Bombwanja clans were taking up arms. Enyuká, for his part, passed the news on to all Bonkoso villages, as well as their relatives by marriage, dependents, and Batswá. The various groups of combatants stationed themselves near the village of Bonganda in what is today the forest of [41] Boóngónjou, between the Lomeké and the present location of Besombó, Lofelɛ́, and Engónjó. The Boéndé army was taken unawares by the Bonkoso, who attacked and after furious combat routed them, leaving a number of dead on the field. Bonyeme proposed a peace. He took pride in not being surpassed in generosity. With a truly princely munificence he was not satisfied with only paying all the clans who had lost members but in addition sent Bompelɛ́ all that the latter needed in order to compensate Bombwanja groups for the loss of their members and, on top of this, brought him a whole fortune to complete Bolúmbú's bride price.

589 The Nkundó are well acquainted with cases of widows who,
587 having reached middle age, take a solemn oath not to remarry or ever go near a man again. Among the stronger sex such cases are almost nonexistent. Cases of women who, when sick and dying wanted to remain near their husbands, cited later (Chap. VI, Art. II, 4) should be noted here, as well as preferences for monogamy (Chap. VII, Art. VI, VII).

581 Bearing in mind the explanation given at the outset, I think I
593 can state that most marriages contracted by the Nkundó are love matches. Marriage for political reasons or for certain material advantages have certainly existed. And especially at the present time, there are parents who push their children into marriage for the sake of financial or social gains.

Our conclusions may not be accepted by a number of colonials. Yet I feel they are valid in the limited sense indicated here. Arguments